



FAIR PLAY IN KIRKPINAR TRADITION AS AN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGEⁱ

Sevda Korkmazⁱⁱ

Istanbul Major Municipality Youth
and Sport Directory,
Turkey

Abstract:

Although it is a fairly new issue discussed in Turkey, Fair Play means nice and fair play as a concept. Fair play can also be explained in the game and ultimately with the understanding of being principled and measured. However, within the 20th century, the commercialization and professionalization of sports started to vulgarize this concept. Regardless of the way, the desire to win can be observed even in traditionally organized sports practices such as Kirkpinar. Kirkpinar Wrestling, which is included in the intangible cultural heritage list by UNESCO, is one of the centuries-long examples of fair play spirit and its reflection in practices. To draw attention to the practices that reveal the concept of fair play in Kirkpinar will strengthen the perception of fair play in the society. In this study, cultural values in the tradition of “Kirkpinar Wrestling”, rituals and practices that can be shown as examples of fair play are tried to be analyzed by literature scanning method.

Keywords: Kirkpinar, fair play, heritage, sports

1. Introduction

Morality (Durusoy, 1991), which is the accepted rules that regulate people's behaviors and relationships in society, has never been two apart subjects, and since early periods of history, imperatives and calls about morality have always been, binding holistic values and norms of the sport (Meinderg, 1991). It is a phenomenon that embraces concepts such as sports, peace, tolerance, virtue, and happiness, and affects the entire existence of the human. The concept of fair play is accepted as the moral principle of the purpose of playing fairly and honestly in every stage and type of sport (Pehlivan, 2004). As a human activity that enables people to develop their physical and spiritual consciousness, a sport (Erdemli, 1997) has local reflections of the understanding and behavior of fair play, which

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ⁱⁱ Correspondence: email svdkrkmz0@gmail.com

is accepted internationally. Therefore, it is possible to see the fair play understanding as an intangible sport heritage in the practices and traditions of the society in which it is made. Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling is one of the activities where the intangible heritage in sports is seen most intensely for our society. Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling, which is accepted as the area where 'manliness and honesty' are shown because it contains fair play elements in its tradition, by UNESCO as a whole with the decision number 5.COM 6.42 on 16 November 2010 (<https://aregem.ktb.gov.tr>). It is included in the Representation List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In this study, it is aimed to reveal the fair play elements in Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling, which is an example of intangible cultural heritage.

2. Method

The literature review method (Demirci, 2014; Keser, <http://kisi.deu.edu.tr>), which is defined as the deep and systematic research and determination of works and works published on a certain subject, was used in our research. Researches, articles, and works which are written on the subject were examined and practices that can be accepted as fair play in the tradition of Kırkpınar were tried to be interpreted.

3. Findings

Intangible Cultural Heritage, which holds an important place in the culture of nations by UNESCO; community, group, and in some cases, the practice defined by individuals as part of their cultural heritage is defined as representation, expression, knowledge, skills and related tools and cultural spaces (Ekici et al., 2011; Oğuz, 2008). These heritage elements, which are transferred from generation to generation, interacting with other elements in the social structure such as nature, music and sports, are constantly re-created by the society and give a sense of identity and continuity to the societies (Oğuz, 2008). Among the values that UNESCO covers within the scope of cultural heritage; traditional sports and games are also found (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/social-practices-rituals-and-00055>). Each nation has an understanding of sports culture, which has gleaned from history and reached today, stemming from the social structure and life styles, and has a partial geographical character (Türkmen et al., 2006). Kırkpınar Wrestling, where the rituals occupy a large place, is among the cultural heritage elements of the Turkish society, and provides important information to understand our society's view of sports, its perception and attitude to sports and the traces of fair play. The cultural elements of the human being (wrestling wrestlers), the relationship of man with nature (oiling-meadow, pasture, musicians songs for wrestlers) are among the indispensable elements of Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling. The analysis of each of these elements is very important in terms of how they were done in the past and how they will be transferred to the future (Kurtişoğlu, Altuğ, 2010). At this point, it is necessary to reveal the spirit of fair play in Kırkpınar by examining the elements that constitute Kırkpınar.

3.1 Wrestling Concept

Wrestling, which is accepted as a kind of "honor form" (Pehlivan, Demir, 2006) in Turkish and relative societies from Greater Asia to the Balkans, consists of the word "kür" root and "eş". Famous Turkish scientist Kaşgarlı Mahmut includes the word "kür-eş" in his work; "Divan-ı Lügat-it Türk" (Arıç, 1993). The word "kür" is "strong, unshakable, hard-hearted, generous, rowdy, self-sacrificing, honest and knowledgeable"; "eş" means "struggle, help, race and competition" by making a verb from the name (Türkmen, Atan, 2012). Kür-er (wrestler) is a brave, unshakable, courageous, rowdy man, as in the sentence *"Whoever rowdy becomes conceited."* "Kür-Eş-mek" (wrestling) means competing with someone else while "eş" means friend and spouse. The person who wrest is called a wrestler (Kahraman, 1989). As it is seen, wrestling means an honest and brave competition.

3.2 Wrestler

The word Pehlivan (wrestler) is from Persian 'Pehlevan' (Yüksel, 2018) and means 'big half, strong person'. The word replaced the title "Alp" in the Turkish epic tradition in the 12th century (Özdemir, 2018). In Turkish tradition, heroes were also called "pehlivan" (wrestler) and people who wrest are also called "pehlivan" (wrestler) by considering as equal to heroes (Gümüş, 1998). Because wrestlers are regarded as an organizational and exemplary person who embodies many virtues and heroic elements, rather than just the person who content with a sports branch (Türkmen, Atan, 2012). In wrestling sport, which is performed in a corporate structure with wrestler dervish lodges, is loaded with a number of moral responsibilities in both social life and while doing sports, and is held by the concept of wrestler of the mature human type (insan-i kamil) in the society. Wrestlers act respectfully in a win or defeat situations, the effort and honesty in the match were appreciated, and the shows of joy after the win were also considered a shameful behavior (Kunter cited in 1949 Yıldırım, 2004). In other words, the title of wrestling has been given not only to those who act in accordance with the spirit of fair play in sports competitions, but also to fair and honest people who set an example to the society in their social lives as a whole. It is possible to say that the love and respect for the wrestler in society is due to the wrestler's power, body structure, muscles and healthy appearance, as well as his brave behavior, his character's compassion, and his reliability in his 'tongue, hand and body' (Kahraman, 1995). In the Kırkpınar tradition, the stories of many wrestlers with these features are told. An important part of the tradition is to show respect for the wrestlers who passed away. Wrestlers in Kırkpınar wrestling, the visit to the wrestler cemetery on the first day of its activity, also means respect and loyalty to the past. After they pray for the past in this visit, the wrestlers come to Sarayıcı to the wrestling square.

3.3 Wrestling Field

Coming from many different regions of Turkey, wrestlers who target success wrestling area is a great place to show themselves as well as a place which wrestler struggle to be

in a good status in society (edirnekirkpinar.com). In Turkish society, wrestling area is considered as the field where honesty is exhibited as 'Er Meydani' (field of contest).

Every place that produces its own human profile develops a language for people and people acquire this language (Ulutaş, 2019). In Kırkpınar wrestling, field of contest is located in the lap of nature, with trees, flowers, birds, lawns and waters symbolizing eternal beauty of nature (Delice, 2011). Kırkpınar area has also produced its own language and values in the historical process. It is possible to see as a reflection of the values exist under the tradition in the name of Er Meydani. Wrestling and Kırkpınar are the common concepts that come to mind when it is mentioned of wrestling field and of an individual who emerges only fights with his own existence, evokes an equal struggle.

3.4 Wrestler Tight's

Another element to be examined to understand the traces of fair play in Kırkpınar is Kispet. It is done by calf or goat leather, the pants that wrestlers wear is called kispet (Yazoğlu, n.d.). When a wrestler goes out to the wrestling square, kispet is the only thing he wears. There are some rules to obey when wearing a Kispet. Because there are some responsibilities that wrestlers have to fulfill when wearing Kispet (Dervişoğlu, 2018). In tradition a wrestler who does not win their coaches approval is not allowed to wear Kispet. A special ceremony is been done to the wrestlers who got their masters approval to wear Kispet. In this ceremony young wrestler, kisses his master and other elders' hands and gets in a show wrestling match with his opponent (Köse, 1990; Çalışkan vd, 2008). Wrestler who wears Kispet is considered to be on the side of right and justice in his entire lifetime (Delice, 2011).

Wrestlers perform a prayer before wearing their Kispet (Delice, 2011). Wrestlers pray, after that they kiss the front rim of the Kispet and put it to their head, then firstly they put their right foot then followed with left foot to wear the Kispet. Taking out the Kispet is the same with putting it on, first they take out their right foot then followed with left foot, after that they kiss the rim (Güven, 1999). Bigger wrestlers made their apprentices carry their baskets. A wrestler putting his basket to the wall means that he stopped wrestling (Ayağ, 1983).

3.5 Peşrev

Peşrev, is called the warmups that athletes do in the oil wrestling (Delice, 2009). Wrestlers get their muscles, heart, brain and soul ready to wrest (Uslu, 2017). With Peşrev and Nara wrestler, gives a message about the wrestling match to the spectators and his rival. Each move in Peşrev has a different meaning (Erdem, 2013) so therefore every move has to be inspected. Wrestlers, after they go out on to square they go back and forth while doing Peşrev, after that right knee on the ground they lean on to their left knee, while they touch the ground, chin and forehead with their right hand, they salaam three times to the spectators. This action means, we came from the soil and we will get back to the soil, there is a God bigger than the creature (Erdem, 2013; Delice, 2011).

While they check out their opponents Kispet and cuffs, they check if the Kispet fits to their opponents' leg. If the Kispet is loose, it will come out, if the Kispet is too tight it will restrain the movement and it will make him get tired quickly (Erdem, 2013). Whereas the opponent's cuff is well-tied creates a difficulty in holding the wrestler, the wrestler wants the opponent's cuff to be tied securely. This action is needed because it is desired not to take advantage of a deficiency of the opponent but to defeat the stronger at the end of the struggle under equal conditions (Küçük, 2007). Wrestlers checking out the cuff and first touching to their lips then their heads meaning is that 'in wrestling, I can't take your dust' (Delice, 2011). While wrestler's patting their opponents in the back, they check their oil, the amount of oil they got and it means they write off each other's debts (Delice, 2011). Wrestlers are introduced to the audience with the maniacs of the juggler after praying to the hound, Hazrat Hamza, with three Ihlas and one Fatiha prayer to Qibla, they go to the oil boiler after wearing their Kispet.

3.6 Cazgır Prayers

The person who introduces the wrestlers with their weak and strong sides is where they come from is called Cazgır. In order to introduce wrestlers to the audience, the Cazgır must know the wrestlers of all sizes, from incentive wrestling to head wrestling in detail. (Köse, 1990). After the wrestlers stand against Qibla in the square, they are introduced to the words of "Allah Allah", with the prayer and prayer (words loaded with verse) of Cazgır (Delice, 2011). These prayers can be exemplified like this;

*"Gönül uyandı Sultan Süleyman'a bak
Hasmın karınca olsa dahi,
Kendisine mert oğlu merdane bak,
Allah Allah İlallah
Diyelim bu gençlere cümleten maşallahⁱⁱⁱ."*

As Cazgır prayers shown *"not to belittle the opponent, to make the struggle unerringly, strength, intelligence and mastery; May cause modesty, not pride."* (Tuncel, 2011)

As national culture the moral and ritual applications this include, makes a sport traditional. In this context, there oiling, cazgırs, prayers, salute, kispet, peşhrev, music, Kırkpınar traditional and etc. elements with wrestlers, agha, drum and shredder, referees and the oilers have traditional clothes with oil wrestlers, it has its own and original cultural texture (Yıldırım, 2000). The rationale and application methods of all these elements in oily wrestling have a fair play understanding.

4. Conclusion

Each country has their different sports practices that are shaped in with their own cultural structures, reflect the view of that society to life, traditions, customs and habits, and

ⁱⁱⁱ It means that "don't underestimate your opponent, see as an equal, all of us say 'praise be'"

reveal social thoughts and behaviors (Durak, 2011) and has sports ethics. Kırkpınar Wrestling, performed and kept alive in Turkish society for ages, gives an idea about Turkish sports morality and fair play in this context. Kırkpınar, which is a part of an important part of Turkish history, has been the symbol of values such as elegance, honor, nobility, bravery, respect for the elder, love and guidance for the young, tolerance as well as physical strength and mastery throughout the ages. However, today, Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling is transformed into the commercial marketing area of the companies, even advertising is taken to the pulleys of the kispets. Doping scandals, fights that oppose referees as if attacking referee decisions, fists that often becomes punching occur. Time limitation, wrestling passively to gain points as these things happen more and more, wrestlers who put everything they have in the square no matter what, or wrestlers who wrestle on an equal basis that its absence has become noticeable. Why are unethical behaviors accepted in the wrestler? How is the concept of success coded that these unethical behaviors are gradually spreading? How can we prevent commercialization, politicization, professionalization in sports from emptying the 'inside' of the Kırkpınar tradition? What is missing or wrong when transferring specific values to Kırkpınar? These questions should be discussed comprehensively, and solutions should be brought.

The ethical codes that form the Kırkpınar tradition are clearly defined here, and the transfer of Kırkpınar ethics, which includes the spirit of fair play, to new generations through education, and realization of these trainings in all channels related to wrestling may be a solution proposal. It should be considered as an option to give these wrestlers the old wrestlers who had previously wrestled in this square. Making short documentaries describing these values in a way that reflects their essence may be beneficial in order to reinforce the moral dimension here by gaining a visual dimension in the minds. Although there are proposals to establish a separate oil wrestling federation, if the new federation to be established does not have a different attitude, it will be an extreme optimism approach to expect different results. It is possible to keep the subject alive in accordance with the essence of the tradition with the participation of all stakeholders. Otherwise, within the tradition, the applications that have a different meaning are only the practices to be made. And it does not seem possible for a tradition that has lost its roots to survive and still maintain its value.

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